

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of

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Serial No.

Filed: March 12, 2001

For: COMMUNICATION IDENTIFIER METHOD

Atty. Ref.: 3842-8

Group:

Examiner:

March 12, 2001

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231



SUBMISSION OF PRIORITY DOCUMENT

Sir:

It is respectfully requested that this application be given the benefit of the foreign filing date under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §119 of the following, a certified copy of which is submitted herewith:

<u>Application No.</u>	<u>Country of Origin</u>	<u>Filed</u>
2000 1316	Norway	03 March 2000

Respectfully submitted,

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KONGERIKET NORGE
The Kingdom of Norway

J1002 U.S. PTO
09/603022
03/12/01

Bekreftelse på patentsøknad nr
Certification of patent application no

2000 1316

Det bekreftes herved at vedheftede dokument er nøyaktig utskrift/kopi av ovennevnte søknad, som opprinnelig inngitt 2000.03.14

It is hereby certified that the annexed document is a true copy of the above-mentioned application, as originally filed on 2000.03.14

2001.02.06

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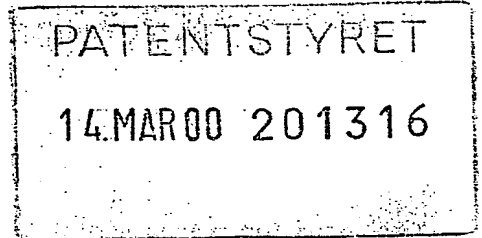
JFL/GJ

14.03.2000

E12615

"ETOP 999081/P13247"

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Communication Identifier Method

Field of the invention

The invention is related to RADIUS-accounting communication and in particular [an arrangement] a method for assigning unique identifiers for allowing communication
5 between a GPRS (General Packet Radio Service)-system and a RADIUS (Remote Authentication Dial In User Service) server.

The problem areas

10 RADIUS (Remote Authentication Dial In User Service) is a protocol used to authenticate remote users logging in to a network and is used as the way to authenticate users in a GPRS-system. In case the RADIUS-server provides the subscriber with a dynamic IP-address to use, a RADIUS accounting-server is used to mark the address as used and freed.

15

The GPRS (General Packet Radio Service) offers a high-speed, packet-switched, mobile datacommunication network, where the subscribers can connect themselves to an external network from a mobile terminal. The GPRS system consists mainly of two nodes, where the Gateway GPRS Support Node (GGSN) is the component involved in
20 this invention.

The subscribers need an IP (Internet Protocol)-address to route packets to and from the external network. This address can be provided by a RADIUS-server, in which case a unique identifier must be provided to relate the subscriber to this IP-address. The
25 identifier is described as attribute Acct-Session-Id in IETF RFC 2139 (April 1997) "RADIUS Accounting". Due to the nature of a GPRS system, a subscriber will with a high degree of probability be connected to an external network for a long time, allocating the IP-address for an equally long period of time.

30 The RADIUS accounting server is requested to start an accounting session when the RADIUS client sends an accounting start request towards the RADIUS accounting server. This is done to mark the address as used by the subscriber in the RADIUS accounting server. The RADIUS client in the accounting start request must give an identifier, and the same identifier is sent in an accounting stop request to stop the
35 accounting and release the IP-address. The identifier must be generated for each subscriber" connection receiving an address from the RADIUS server, and it must be guaranteed to be unique for each connection.

The GPRS-system can be connected to several external networks, and all the networks may use the same RADIUS server. The different networks may also contain the same range of addresses (private address-space), and hence the RADIUS server must be able
5 to give out the same IP-address to subscribers belonging to the different external networks.

Known solutions and problems with these

- 10 The identifier is usually made from the time in the system acting as a client (usually an NAS) towards the RADIUS server. Other solutions are one or several counters that are incremented for each new accounting session and/or for each restart of the system. It is also known that some implementations use process identifiers as a part of the identifier.
- 15 The main problem with the above-mentioned solutions is that they all require system resources to create and maintain the generation of the identifiers. Getting the system-time does not require any storage, but may be inaccurate or inefficient in case of a large number of simultaneously requests for the system-time. Having counters to be
20 incremented will use system memory, computational time to recalculate the values and some algorithm to avoid two subscribers getting the same value of the counter. The counter must also be large enough to generate enough identifiers to all the possible subscribers. These values will not be predictable and are usually based on statistical distribution to assure uniqueness; hence they can not be guaranteed to be absolutely
25 unique.

Objects of the invention

An object of the invention is to overcome the problems related to prior art solutions in the art, by providing unique identifiers without involving necessity for any new system
30 resources other than those already available.

Brief disclosure of the invention

- The method according to the invention includes the steps of:
- 35 - connecting one or more external networks to the GPRS system and identifying the or each network with an APN (Access Point Name), and
- assigning to an or each APN external network a gateway address,

and the further steps of:

- passing an APN-external network authentication request from a GGSN (Gateway GPRS support Node) to said RADIUS server,
- providing from said RADIUS server to said GGSN upon such request a subscriber IP (Internet Protocol) address to be stored in said GGSN (Gateway GPRS Support Node), said subscriber IP address being unique for the respective APN external network defined in said GGSN,
- using said GGSN for combining the APN gateway address and the subscriber IP address, to form a unique subscriber identifier, and
- sending from said GGSN said identifier to the RADIUS server for accounting, e.g. in the form of an ASCII string.

Further characteristic features of the invention will appear from the following description and the attached patent claims, and with reference to the enclosed drawing figures.

Brief description of the drawings

Figure 1 illustrates the basic steps for generating an identifier, and

Figure 2 illustrates three external networks with a subscriber connected to each network.

Detailed description of embodiments

The invention is now to be described firstly with reference to Figure 1.

When connecting an external network to the GPRS system, the network is identified with an Access Point Name (APN), such as e.g. APN1 (see Figure 1). Each APN is given a gateway address GW in the GGSN, as seen from the external network. By assuring that this IP-address is unique for each APN defined in the GGSN, all the external networks will have its own, unique identifier. Since two subscribers (MS) in the same external network should never use the same IP-address at the same time, subscribers connected to the same APN will always have different IP-addresses. The idea is to combine these two IP-addresses, the gateway-address for the APN and the address assigned to the subscriber, to form the identifier.

When the GGSN receives an IP-address to send to the subscriber from the RADIUS-server, it looks up the gateway-address belonging to the external net to which the subscriber is connecting himself. This address has already been configured when the external network is attached to the GPRS-system, and checked to be unique within the
5 GGSN.

To construct the identifier to send to the RADIUS accounting-server the GGSN will now use these two available IP-addresses. The addresses can be appended to form a eight byte long identifier (in case of IP-addresses from IP version 4), or the numbers
10 could be converted to ASCII numbers to make the string printable. When the numbers are converted it would be wise to insert dots (ASCII value 46) between the decimal-groups in the addresses to be able to clearly see the addresses used in the identifier (e.g. for an operator looking into the accounting records).

15 Gateway-address = 129.24.24.1

MS IP-address = 129.24.24.24

ASCII codes: 129 24 24 1 129 24 24 24 (non printable)

20

Or transform the number to ASCII codes for the numbers to make them printable:

ASCII codes: 49 50 57 46 50 52 46 50 52 46 49 46 49 50 57 46 50 52 46 50 52 46 50 52
(which would be readable as "129.24.24.1.129.24.24.24")

25

The identifier is suitably passed to the RADIUS server as an ASCII string. (See Figure 1).

Thus, the gateway address is the address of the GPRS-system/GGSN as seen from the
30 external network (APN, e.g. APN1) and the subscriber could be a mobile terminal MS connected to the external network through the GPRS-system.

On Figure 2, the subscribers MS1, MS2 and MS3 have for sake of reference to their respective networks APN1, APN2 and APN3 been indicated on the right hand side of
35 the drawing figure.

The APN name and the respective APN gateway address to the GGSN seen from the network are configured, as such new network is linked to the GPRS system. The operator will normally manually assign the APN name and the gateway address, and the RADIUS server is not involved in such operation.

5

Figure 2 shows three external networks connected to a GGSN node in a GPRS system. Each network has one subscriber connected and all the three networks use the same RADIUS server for authentication and dynamic IP-address allocation for the subscribers. Even though the networks identified as APN2 and APN3 has assigned the same IP-address to the two subscribers, the identifier will be unique because of the different gateway addresses. Table I shows the generated identifiers for the three subscribers.

Table 1

APN	Gateway Address	Subscriber IP Address	Identifier
APN1	129.24.24.1	129.24.24.24	"129.24.24.1.129.24.24.24"
APN2	193.25.01	193.25.5.1	"193.25.0.1.193.25.5.1"
APN3	193.26.0.1	193.25.5.1	"193.26.0.1.193.25.5.1"

15

Advantages

The creation of the identifier used for accounting purposes described above will not involve any new resources than the ones already available. Since the addresses already are unique, the combination of the two addresses will form a perfectly valid identifier. This will not restrict any limitations on concurrency regarding RADIUS accounting messages, and the identifier is guaranteed unique as long as the subscriber is still using the assigned IP-address (i.e. no accounting stop has been sent towards the RADIUS server). The creation of the identifier will not use any extra resources whatsoever, and will always be available as long as an IP-address exists.

25

The identifier will also be very predictable, and only by looking at this one can tell which external network the accounting record belongs to, as well as knowing the IP-address for the subscriber.

30

Whenever several IP-addresses are available, which together will identify the object in question uniquely, these addresses can be concatenated to form a unique identifier.



P a t e n t c l a i m s

1.

A method for assigning unique identifiers for allowing communication between a GPRS
5 (General Packet Radio Service) system and a RADIUS (Remote Authentication Dial In
User Service) server, the method including the steps of:

- connecting one or more external networks to the GPRS system and identifying the
or each network with an APN (Access Point Name), and

- assigning to an or each APN external network a gateway address,

10 and the further steps of:

- passing an APN-external network authentication request from a GGSN (Gateway
GPRS Support Node) to said RADIUS server,

- providing from said RADIUS server to said GGSN upon such request a subscriber
IP (Internet Protocol) address to be stored in said GGSN (Gateway GPRS Support
15 Node), said subscriber IP address being unique for the respective APN external network
defined in said GGSN,

- using said GGSN for combining the APN gateway address and the subscriber IP
address, to form a unique subscriber identifier, and

- sending from said GGSN said identifier to the RADIUS server for accounting, e.g.
20 in the form of an ASCII string.

2.

The method according to claim 1, wherein:

Two or more of said APN external networks are provided with same subscriber IP
25 address, but different gateway addresses to yield different unique APN identifiers.

3.

The method according to claim 1, wherein

Two or more subscribers are present in at least one of said networks, each subscriber in
30 a common network being provided with its own subscriber IP address, but same
network gateway address.

4.

The method according to claim 1, wherein

35 The identifier is a code string having as a first element the gateway address of the APN
external network in question and as a second element the subscriber IP address
appended thereto.



A method for assigning unique identifiers for allowing communication between a GPRS (General Packet Radio Service) system and a RADIUS (Remote Authentication Dial In User Service) server. The method includes the steps of connecting one or more external networks to the GPRS system and identifying the or each network with an APN (Access Point Name), and assigning to an or each APN external network a gateway address. Further steps include passing an APN-external network authentication request from a GGSN (Gateway GPRS Support Node) to said RADIUS server, providing from said RADIUS server to said GGSN upon such request a subscriber IP (Internet Protocol) address to be stored in said GGSN (Gateway GPRS Support Node), said subscriber IP address being unique for the respective APN external network defined in said GGSN, using said GGSN for combining the APN gateway address and the subscriber IP address, to form a unique subscriber identifier, and sending from said GGSN said identifier to the RADIUS server for accounting, e.g. in the form of an ASCII string.



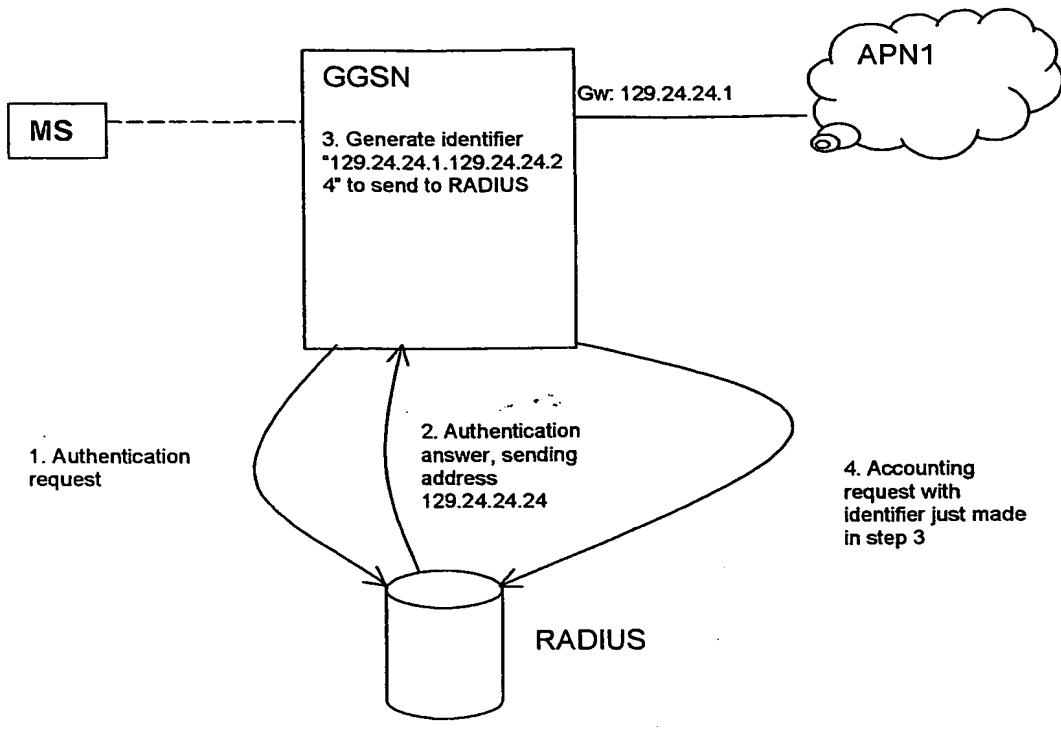


Figure 1

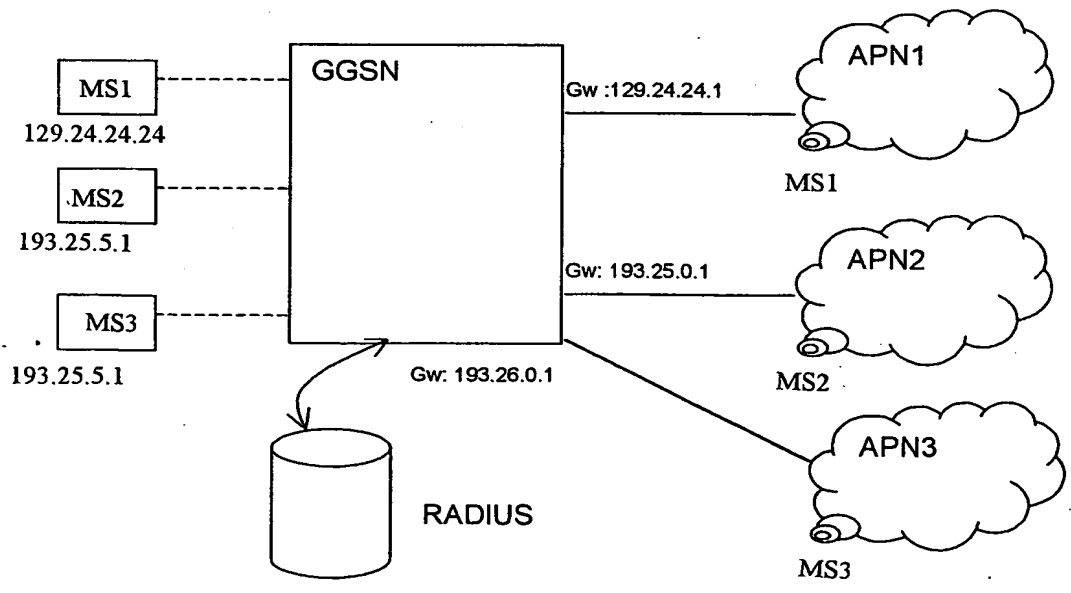


Figure 2

